

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 06249 081513Z
ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
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-----015882 081752Z /11
P R 081432Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9326
INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 6249

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: SET RETURNS TO WORK BUT THREATENS TO RESIGN

REF: QUITO 6185

1. THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL (SET) RETURNED TO BALLOT COUNTING THE EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 6. AT THE START OF THE SESSION SET PRESIDENT BAQUERO DE LA CALLE ISSUED A STRONG WARNING TO POLITICAL PARTIES TO COOPERATE WITH THE TRIBUNAL, COUPLED WITH A THREAT THAT THE SET WOULD RESIGN EN MASSE SHOULD "UNWARRANTED" ATTACKS ON ITS PERFORMANCE AND THE HONOR OF ITS MEMBERS NOT END. BAQUERO REGRETTE THE NECESSITY OF CANCELING THE SEPTEMBER 5 SESSION BUT BLAMED THE PROBLEM ON THE PARTIES. HE NOTED THAT SPOKESMEN FOR ALL MAJOR CANDIDATES HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO SPEAK, INCLUDING TWO SPOKESMEN FOR JAIME ROLDOS COALITION. HE SAID HE REFUSED TO LET ANOTHER ROLDOS REPRESENTATIVE SPEAK BECAUSE THE SET WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS. HE REMARKED THAT IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT POLITICIANS, DEPRIVED OF PUBLIC PLATFORMS FOR SO MANY YEARS, FEEL CONSTRAINED TO DECLAIM AT LENGTH, BUT SAID HE COULD NOT LET THE SET'S WORK SUFFER AS A RESULT.

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PAGE 02 QUITO 06249 081513Z

2. POPULAR DEMOCRACY PRESIDENT JULIO CESAR TRUJILLO RESPONDED TO BAQUERO'S COMMENTS BY CHARGING THAT THE PROBLEM LIES IN BAQUERO'S REFUSAL TO ENFORCE THE SET'S RULE LIMITING EACH SPEAKER TO THREE MINUTES. HE SAID THAT THE SET ALLOWS SOME INDIVIDUALS TO TALK AT WILL AND THEN SHUTS OFF OTHERS. HE CALLED ON BAQUERO TO STRICTLY ENFORCE THE TIME LIMIT RULE IN ORDER TO EXPEDITE THE VOTE COUNT.

3. COMMENT: BAQUERO'S THREAT THAT THE SET WILL RESIGN
CARRIES AN OMINOUS RING. HE MAY HAVE JUST BEEN VENTING
FRUSTRATION AT THE UNCONTROLLED EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 5, BUT
HE MIGHT ALSO BE FURTHER SETTING THE STAGE FOR CANCELLATION
OF THE FIRST ROUND ELECTIONS. THE VOTE COUNT DID PROCEED
WITHOUT INCIDENT SEPTEMBER 6 WITH CONSIDERATION OF A
NUMBER OF TABLES IN GUAYAQUIL'S POPULOUS FEBRES-CORDERO
PARIS. PAST EXPERIENCE LEADS THE EMBASSY TO BELIEVE,
HOWEVER, THAT THIS IS SIMPLY THE LULL BEFORE THE NEXT
STORM AS RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA SUPPORTERS IN COLLUSION
WITH GOE AND SET OFFICIALS CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TO
SABOTAGE THE RETORNO PROCESS.
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